



Leaders' Pledge on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct

The Leaders' Pledge on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct represents our shared commitment as Canada's global development and humanitarian leaders to ensure the full implementation of practices and policies that will protect and respond to our own staff, volunteers and the communities we serve.

As a sector, we recognize our duty of care to all the people we work with, which is further amplified by power imbalances inherent in our work. We are committed to creating safe and respectful workplaces and programs that promote gender equality and are free from gender-based violence, by addressing and responding to all abuse of power, holding people to account and protecting the vulnerable.

While standards and legal frames already exist, this pledge is our promise to take additional steps to improve policy and practice with respect to sexual misconduct (including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and sexual harassment), including within our organizations and throughout our interactions with the partners, communities, and people with whom we work.

As the Leaders of Cooperation Canada Members and other organizations, we commit to:

- Establish a culture of zero tolerance to all forms of sexual misconduct in all the work that we do;
- Improve our collective ability to recognize and tackle power imbalances and gender inequalities that can enable sexual misconduct, including intersecting forms of discrimination;
- Strengthen existing organizational policies and practices to prevent and address sexual misconduct;
- Aim to create work environments free from sexual misconduct by and of civil society organization (CSO) staff and volunteers within our organizations and the countries in which we operate;
- Support survivors/victims of sexual misconduct;
- Ensure all allegations are investigated, and that perpetrators are held to account, including through prosecution and/or dismissal where appropriate;
- Encourage greater sectoral cooperation and transparency on the development of measures aimed to prevent perpetrators of sexual misconduct from gaining re-employment within the sector;
- Benefit from each other's experiences and strengths, and identify joint solutions, including by sharing and building knowledge and capacity around survivor/victim-centred approaches; and
- Promote this pledge and provide support to ensure that its commitments are met by the entire sector.

Towards these commitments we will:

- Develop a sectoral mechanism to identify, support implementation of, and monitor best practices for prevention and safeguard, effective response, accountability mechanisms and transparency regarding incidents of sexual misconduct, no matter where they occur or the personnel involved;
- Support our partners to take all appropriate measures to prevent and address sexual misconduct of and by their staff, including by working with them to build their capacity to fulfill the above commitments within their own organizations and operations;
- In line with a survivor/victim-centred approach, inform relevant authorities where appropriate, and cooperate fully in all investigations when sexual misconduct is reported;
- Provide appropriate training to all staff to ensure shared understanding of policies, procedures and safeguarding mechanisms around sexual misconduct;
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers accept and understand their responsibilities with respect to reporting all forms of inappropriate behaviour, even if they are not the target of the behaviour;
- Examine and strengthen ways to empower communities in which we work to report all incidents of sexual misconduct;
- Protect informant safety within mechanisms for reporting sexual misconduct, by
 - providing clear, transparent, and accessible reporting systems;
 - maintaining, wherever possible, confidentiality for informants and whistleblowers; and
 - ensuring freedom from reprisal or punishment for individuals and communities involved in reporting;
- Work together to ensure that safeguards are integrated throughout the employment cycle, from the start of employment through regular training and performance to the post-employment phase;
- Ensure that safeguarding mechanisms are properly resourced, including funding, time and space;
- Enable staff to share learning and struggles within a respectful, confidential and safe environment; and
- Continue to identify other actions and opportunities to improve our understanding and practices for the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct within our work, both as individual organizations and as a collective sector.

We recognize that these are a demanding set of commitments, and that it will take time for all member organizations to make the institutional and cultural changes necessary to meet this high standard. We are resolved to work together to ensure that Canada's development and humanitarian sector is a global leader in the prevention and response to sexual misconduct.